



NEWS RELEASE

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THREE VALLEY RESIDENTS INDICTED ON FIREARMS AND OBSTRUCTION CHARGES

Anchorage, Alaska – United States Attorney Nelson P. Cohen announced today, February 21, 2008, that a federal grand jury in Anchorage indicted three Matanuska Valley residents on charges relating to illegal weapons possession and obstruction of justice.

The six-count indictment named Aaron Joel Tolen, age 25, of Wasilla, Alaska, as well as Palmer residents Michael Scott Wilson, age 25, and Kendra Grace Butts, age 19, as defendants.

According to the indictment, law enforcement officers detained Tolen and Wilson on October 31, 2007. The vehicle Tolen and Wilson were using, which belonged to Kendra Butts, contained a dozen firearms. Tolen and Wilson are felons; therefore, both faces charges of being felons in possession of a firearm or ammunition.

After being taken into custody, Wilson made recorded calls from jail to Butts, his girlfriend. In those calls, Wilson and Butts agreed that Butts should surreptitiously remove the various firearms from her truck, which was then in a law enforcement impound facility, in order to hinder federal prosecution of Wilson for possession of them. Alternatively, Wilson and Butts agreed that Butts should set fire to her truck and its contents to destroy the evidence. Butts drove by the facility to ascertain whether the plan was feasible. For these actions, Wilson and Butts are charged with conspiring to obstruct justice. The indictment further alleges that Tolen attempted to convince a third party to conceal incriminating evidence. For this, Mr. Tolen is charged with attempting to obstruct justice.

Assistant United States Attorney Kimberly Sayers-Fay, who presented the case to the grand jury, stated that the maximum penalty for the obstruction charges Wilson and Butts face is 20 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. The maximum penalty for the obstruction charge Tolen faces is 10 years imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Tolen and Wilson also face weapons possession charges that carry a maximum penalty of ten years in jail, a \$250,000 fine, or both. Under the Federal Sentencing Guidelines, the actual sentence imposed would be based upon the seriousness of the offenses and the defendants' prior criminal history.

Alaska State Troopers and the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) conducted the investigation leading to the indictment in this case.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and

is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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